



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE AND CBP DISCOVER 28 ILLEGAL ALIENS INSIDE A SMUGGLER'S STASH HOUSE

This is the second discovery in Brownsville within a week

BROWNSVILLE, Texas — Officers with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in Brownsville, along with state and local enforcement partners, announced today the arrest of 28 illegal aliens from Central America. The aliens were discovered in a “stash house” used by alien smugglers.

Agents responded late Tuesday to a call east of Adams St. in Brownsville where locals witnessed several dozen aliens being loaded into vehicles. Agents arrived at the scene and took custody of those inside the house. Following their preliminary interviews, ICE agents determined that all 28 had illegally entered the United States and are subject to removal. The group consisted of 18 Mexicans, eight Guatemalans and two Hondurans among which five were females.

“This discovery illustrates the strong partnerships established within the law enforcement community which led to arresting these individuals,” said Alonzo Pena, special agent-in-charge of the ICE San Antonio office. “ICE will not tolerate this type of criminal activity. Our agents investigate and compile evidence against alien smugglers who have repeatedly shown that they have no regard for human life.”

Last week, ICE agents also arrested 26 Central Americans staged inside another stash house on the San Marcelo block, south of Brownsville. In addition to the arrests, agents seized four vehicles, \$13,000 in cash, and one pistol just blocks away from the stash house. ICE filed federal charges against two of the men for their alleged involvement in transporting and harboring illegal aliens into the United States.

The majority of those arrested represent countries other than Mexico. Last summer, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff announced the expansion of the Expedited Removal program under the Secure Border Initiative (SBI) to areas along the Texas Southern Border. SBI allows ICE to quickly remove “other than Mexican” (OTM) illegal aliens to their home countries under an “expedited removal” process.

Expedited removal is an administrative process aimed at reducing the number of OTMs who have spent less than 14 days in the United States, and who are apprehended within 100 miles of the border. OTMs apprehended under the expedited removal program are detained and quickly returned to their countries of origin after they receive travel documents. Since the expedited removal process doesn't require these aliens to appear before a federal immigration judge, they're able to be deported more quickly. Consequently, expedited removal reduces the time illegal aliens remain in detention awaiting their deportation from about 30 days to an average of 15 days.

ICE agents continue their investigation into both cases.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.